



First Step Toward Shared Innovation: Engage the Team in the Idea of a Patient-Centered Medical Home

We've all been consumers of a health care system. Every one of the members on your team has a story to tell about their personal experiences or the experience of a Veteran they know. Some stories are positive and some are negative. Listen to their stories because they will tell you what a Patient-Centered Medical Home (PCMH) is.

A well functioning PCMH is fundamentally about a team of people working together towards a common and passionately held goal: delivering exceptional health care to our Veterans. Every member of the team needs to know that their work and ideas are valued. Early on in the process of building a PCMH, it is important to engage the experiences and knowledge of each member of your medical team. This process helps your team understand what they are trying to accomplish and why the PCMH is an important effort. This approach sends a strong message that every member of team matters and that their ideas and work are important.

Rather than you telling your team what a PCMH is, let them tell you. Here's how: ask them to think with you about some key questions-

- 1) If we were to create the world's best primary care experience, what would it be like? What would the experience be like when the Veteran visits the clinic? What would the experience be like when the Veteran is at home? What would the experience be like when the Veteran is an inpatient?
- 2) What kinds of things do you think that the people who work on the world's best primary care team think are the most important things to do to create this experience?
- 3) How close to the world's best outpatient primary care team do you think we are? Why do you think we are close or not close?
- 4) How would we know if we were the world's best outpatient primary care team? What things would we have to measure in order to know this to be true about us?

If you ask these questions, or others similar to them, your team will identify issues about access, clinical quality and skills, patient-centeredness, safety, and coordination of care. These ideas will serve as a starting point for your team because they will align with the goals of the PCMH. Do this and your team will show you a path to follow as you begin your journey towards developing your medical homes.

Key Principles VA Patient-Centered Medical Home

Patient-Driven

The primary care team is focused on the whole person. Patient-preferences guide the care provided to the patient.

Team-Based

Primary care is delivered by an interdisciplinary team led by a primary care provider using facilitative leadership skills.

Efficient

Veterans receive the care they need at the time they need it from an interdisciplinary team functioning at the highest level of their competency.

Comprehensive

Primary care serves as a point of first contact for a broad range of medical, behavioral and psychosocial needs that are fully integrated with other VHA health services and community resources.

Continuous

Every patient has an established and continuous relationship with a personal primary care provider.

Communication

The communication between the Veteran patient and other team members is honest, respectful, reliable and culturally sensitive.

Coordinated

The PCMH team coordinates care for the patient across and between the health care systems including the private sector.